

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 231 480

JC 830 329

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TITLE Use of Live TV to Offset Low Enrollments in a Multi-Campus Setting.
PUB DATE 14 Jul 83
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Research Association (Ann Arbor, MI, July 14, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; Cost Effectiveness; *Educational Television; Faculty Development; Multicampus Colleges; Needs Assessment; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; *Telecourses; *Television Teachers; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Cuyahoga Community College OH

ABSTRACT

In spring 1983, a pilot project was implemented at Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) to conduct a section of a low enrollment course, "The Psychology of Aging," in the main campus's television studio, with two-way communication between the main campus and the two suburban campuses. The project's success was assisted by insuring job security for instructors; crediting enrollments to the campus where students attended class; developing a support system for the dissemination of handouts and tests and the coordination of attendance, room assignments, etc.; and declaring the instructor of record, rather than the director of television production, as the final authority. Before increasing the use of live television, a full-scale market analysis should be conducted, major attention should be directed at course selection, and the college should make a commitment to offer the courses. In addition, a staff development program must be implemented, involving, for example, exposing instructors to a variety of television courses, videotaping current classes for instructor self-evaluation, and encouraging instructors to outline the entire course in detail. Instructional and technical support systems are also important aspects of program success. The benefits of the project included an improved institutional image, increased skills of the television staff, and the utilization of the school's current resources in new ways. (LL)

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ED231480

USE OF LIVE TV TO OFFSET LOW
ENROLLMENTS IN A MULTI-CAMPUS
SETTING.

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PAPER PRESENTED AT THE 1983 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTH CENTRAL
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION ON JULY 14, 1983 IN ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN.

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USE OF LIVE TV TO OFFSET LOW ENROLLMENTS
IN A MULTI-CAMPUS SETTING

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A common occurrence in the liberal arts at the community college is the cancellation of second year courses for low enrollments. Administrators are faced with program integrity questions as they try to balance off the need to keep course offerings cost effective and the need to keep their liberal arts programs viable if they hope to maintain an Associate of Arts program that is truly transferable to four year schools.

At the same time, many institutions are exploring ways to utilize TV as a medium to reach more students in an "extra-campus" environment that tries to accomodate instructional offerings with student free time. One method of utilizing TV that has not been widely applied is the use of a TV component in a live instructional setting that beams classrooms to several campuses with two - way communication between instructors and students.

Cuyahoga Community College was faced with this very situation in many of its Social & Behavioral Sciences programs. One course in particular, Psychology of Aging (PSY 108), had cancelled every section over a two year period on three campuses for low enrollments averaging 4-8 students each. The college possessed a micro-wave communication system between its three campuses but was primarily using it to beam taped or "canned" courseware for special non-credit programs. The facility was originally designed to concentrate on beaming intact courseware from the Ohio

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Instructional TV network into and from the school.

A pilot project was implemented in the Spring of 1983 to conduct a section of PSY 108 in the main campus TV studio, with two-way communications between the main campus and the two suburban campuses. A section of the course was scheduled at the three campuses concurrently, with students reporting to each campus studio for class. Enrollments were 18 at the main campus, 4 and 7 at the two suburban campuses.

ISSUES

Several issues have been identified for discussion. They were obvious in hindsight: college planning does an excellent job in anticipating hardware needed, instructional costs, support costs, and the overall strategic direction an organizational unit will follow. However, this planning function minimizes (or leaves hazy) some very important implementation steps necessary for successes.

First, the institutional staff development program had no individual who could assist in training faculty in TV techniques. The TV staff had to perform most of it, learning as they went. Prior experience in TV taping productions proved helpful, but live TV must adapt to errors or bugs as they arise. Editing is non-existent in live TV.

Second, the environment of collective bargaining requires attention to job security issues. The union was aware that TV is being explored as a way of offering instruction at a very low

cost. Discussions had to be conducted to insure that no jobs were threatened as a result of this technique.

Third, and perhaps most important: Who gets the FTE? CCC determined that the campus would get the FTE of the students enrolled in the section on the campus. This minimized turf issues greatly. Since the overall thrust of the pilot project was to maintain program integrity and not concentrate on cost effectiveness, the decision essentially allocated several courses in this predicament among the campuses if they chose to attempt the effort.

Fourth, the support or coordination system for the dissemination of handouts, tests, attendance, room assignments, schedule publishing, and proctoring for exams was non-existent and had to be developed. At times, the discussion centered around who was responsible for academic honesty being enforced in the classroom. The TV technicians were extremely reluctant to undertake any of the support activities, believing that area to be the purview of the academic line. The "satellite" campuses did not have clear procedures set up to assign support staff from existing responsibilities. These procedures had to be worked out in a climate where the support staff were forming a collective bargaining unit. There were some snafus.

Fifth, one major role conflict developed that was entirely unanticipated: who is in charge of the course - the director of the TV production or the instructor of record? It was resolved by declaring the instructor the final authority. Frequent meetings

had to be scheduled, regularly and usually after the class session and the next day, to minimize any communication problems between the instructional purposes and the demands of the production. This was a different arrangement from that worked out for the College's ongoing course offering via cable and a video tape network with area hospitals. In that type of production, the director had final say with the instructor playing the role of a very powerful consultant. Future live TV productions should have less difficulties as a result of the agreement reached.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

As in many pilot projects, the cost effectiveness was nil. The production required one instructor, one cameraman/sound technician at each site(2), two technicians to monitor from the broadcast switch room, a director, and two cameramen in the main studio. Cost effectiveness would rise if four or five courses were being offered in the same quarter. The college administration viewed the effort as one of utilizing existing high tech support systems to maintain program integrity in a manner that allowed the courses to be offered, rather than cancelling them for low enrollments. This administrative support was and is absolutely crucial for the success of the program. The president, vice-presidents, provosts, and deans gave it full support and thus allowed it to occur.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

While it may seem obvious, an accurate picture of the potential market for an effort of this kind is essential. Frequently, marketing activities in some institutions are really a needs analysis performed by staff. Administration is looking for innovation, ideas are encouraged, and some funds spent to assist the further development and planning of ventures new to the institution. But a needs analysis (or assessment) tends to be self-fulfilling. The ideas are so exciting, previous institutional research has indicated that there may be a potential for "this kind of program", and since risk is inherent in good management everything just "falls into line" for a commitment to a pilot or first attempt.

A full scale market analysis will determine if the students likely to enroll are full time or part time; day, evening, or weekend; technical or liberal arts majors; degree seeking or certificate programs.

Attention must be directed at realistic enrollments, not potential, as this technique may be suited for maintaining a program (student retention) rather than recruiting for any particular program. The total enrollments will not, of course, be a simple addition of the numbers of students enrolled in the cancelled sections.

Another factor to consider is the positive effects on an advertizing campaign that uses visual displays. A short feature that highlights the effort as an example of a modern approach to

instruction can enhance an image of professionalism within the instructional staff and faculty. Citizens are likely to view such a "high tech" system as an example of institutional commitment to excellence, updating, and student completion of educational programs offered by the school. Counselors and others, major actors in recruitment activities, may develop a sense of satisfaction in knowing they are recommending students to such a progressive school.

Major attention must be directed at the type of course an institution would be willing to invest time and money. Courses that lend themselves to films, slides, and lecture presentations would seem to fit well. Laboratory courses that involve manipulation of equipment would not be suitable in most instances. Courses that lend themselves well to CAI/CMI approaches, but lack the necessary enrollments to justify the huge resources required for computer utilization (software development) would appear to be excellent candidates.

Students will eventually discover which courses are cancelled most quarters/semesters. The likely behavior which they will exhibit will be the substitution of other courses and participation in the student "network" that would encourage such activity. Thus, the school must commit itself to offering the section at published times and places that "run" even with pathetic enrollments. This will build a steady population of students who plan on taking the course via this medium at the specified times.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

If an institution is starting out in this area, release time for faculty in the preceding quarter is a requisite for success. The release time tends to create a sense of "ownership" in the faculty affected. This ownership is crucial when the faculty member realizes the effort will involve more than that expended by switching textbooks.

First, the instructor must be exposed to viewing of several different courses offered via the TV medium. This may be as simple as watching the local cable efforts or traveling to a nearby school that utilizes TV.

Second, the instructor should have some current classes video taped. This will acquaint him/her with the hardware intrusion of cables, lights, monitors, cameramen, technicians, and administrators gravitating towards the spotlights. This technique, called micro teaching by some, is very powerful in exposing the dull delivery technique employed by many lecturers. It is a shock for the instructor at first and the staff development program should anticipate a sharp decline in enthusiasm for the whole effort. It is absolutely essential that the video tape demonstrate to the instructor that writing on the blackboard does not have the same informal effect as in the classroom - it frequently looks very sloppy and childlike. This helps the staff encourage the faculty person to develop "electronic transparencies" for a succinct presentation of main points.

Third, building upon the video tape experience, good audio visual techniques for classroom instruction need to be reviewed by the instructor and the TV technicians.

Fourth, the instructor must clearly outline the entire course in detail with special attention paid to the sequencing of material, films, graphs, charts, etc. Specific transparencies need to be prepared for specific dates and "shows". This is major clerical function, one which requires almost all of the faculty member's time and efforts. Few instructors actually map the progress of a course in such detail and the experience may be disenchanting for some.

Fifth, the staff development effort must establish clear, frank, and frequent lines of communication between the technicians and the instructor. A sense of comraderie should develop to minimize the professional threats inherent in such an effort. A good development effort will delineate the lines of responsibility between the instructor and the director/producer. This area of role conflict is not readily apparent to those attempting the project for the first time. But live TV does an excellent job of detecting and portraying the "ruffled feathers" of an instructor told to move over to a better "spot" for the picture just as the major summation commences.

Sixth, the instructor and technical crew (taking advantage of the comraderie deliberately cultivated) should meet the same day to professionally critique the latest broadcast within an agreed upon set of priorities for targeting improvements. Novices critique

too much too soon. CCC decided to identify only one item or component in each broadcast to correct or more fully develop in the next lesson. This technique allowed the instructor the flexibility to control the process by placing her in a position of deciding what was to be modified, as the result of the discussion. She in effect was able to dismiss some critiques for that day as "unimportant" and, thus, not threatening.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Clearly, this is an implementation aspect that can destroy many an effort. There are essentially two major areas within this domain: regular instructional support and technical support.

The technical support system is conducted by the TV unit staff. Checklists regarding cable connections, light connections, screen text writers, overhead transparencies in proper order for visual overlay, bringing the system up for a live "go", etc. Failure to develop checklists will invariably result in snafus of the highest order that are solved by connecting the speaker cable at the second campus (or whatever).

The technical system also forces instructional delivery management decisions that almost always arise: what happens if there is a power failure? Do the students leave class, wait ten minutes? What happens if the instructor is delayed by traffic? Do we put on reruns? What happens if one site is lost but the other two aren't? Do we have a video tape backup that can be delivered to the "lost" campus in time for the students to view before the

next broadcast? Many practitioners call this the "what if planning" phase of all good projects.

The second major area is the instructional support system. The instructor must also make out checklists of materials to be delivered, typed up, handed out, overheads to be prepared or unearthed, and identification of proctoring needs for testing. Support staff on one campus may feel the instructor is a foreigner that is intruding onto his/her turf and is not "one" of the faculty as are those on the campus of job responsibility. This lack of ownership on part of the satellite campus support staff frequently causes many of the "I just forgot about it" snafus that must be monitored. If an instructor has planned to utilize a printed handout for part of her lesson, one campus not having possession while other campuses do possess it is a situation that causes some discontent.

It was the experience at CCC that the technical support systems went through a "shake down" period that was quite eventful. However, the checklist system eventually stopped most major snafus not caused by the weather. The instructional support system, on the other hand, had to be constantly monitored to prevent minor but irritating errors. Future efforts will identify persons responsible for support needs at the same time scheduling and room coordination is conducted.

BENEFITS

The benefits for the students are obvious. The benefits for the institution are several. Students perceive the institution as being concerned they can finish their program. The image of the school is enhanced by utilizing high tech solutions to instructional needs and the president and the board can posture the school positively in the total community.

The TV staff gains skills useful in the production of intact, "canned", productions for release through the local cable systems and the state educational network. The school may even consider entering the market for courseware via TV for sale in the regional or national arena. Having experienced what live TV is (it's not far removed from the tales told by entertainers some days) allows the technical staff to anticipate techniques and strategies that would work with productions to be marketed on a grander scale.

Many schools possess TV equipment that is not used as extensively as originally planned. While a program of this type is highly labor intensive on the surface, it does utilize resources already expended by the school. Thus, the cost effectiveness of the whole technical unit will rise even though the individual project might be somewhat expensive. In the future, if more cost effective projects arise to compete for access to the TV system, the low enrollment TV project can be abandoned. The technical staff, however, will have developed excellent skills which will be transferable to other situations.

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